

**City of Buchanan Commission Minutes**  
**April 26, 2021**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the City Commission was held via electronic meeting on Monday, April 26, 2021, and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Sean Denison. The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Recognition**

None

**Roll Call**

Present: Mayor Sean Denison, Commissioners Cameron Downey, Larry Money, Patrick Swem, Mark Weedon

Absent: None

City Staff: City Manager, Heather Grace; City Clerk, Barbara Pitcher; Treasurer, Stephanie Powers; Community Development Director, Rich Murphy; Police Chief, Tim Ganus; Director of Public Works, JT Adkerson; Water Operator in Charge, Scott Desenberg; DPW Staff, Mike Baker; Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent, Bill Housand; City Attorney, Mitt Drew

Guests: Frank Demkoski, Dale Toerne, Jerry Flenar, Don Ryman, Dan Vigansky, Monroe Lemay, Kim Moyer, Debra Haight, Rebecka Hoyt, Rick Boone, Lydia A, Susannah Deneau, Alan Robandt, Corilee Scanlon, Mary Lister and several others unidentified.

**Agenda**

***Downey moved, seconded by Weedon to accept the agenda as amended. Roll call vote carried unanimously.***

**Public Comments (agenda items)**

None

**Consent Calendar**

- Approve Minutes: Regular City Commission Meeting, April 12, 2021.
- Approve Invoices/Expenditures: for April 26, 2021 in the amount of **\$549,922.82**
  - \$ 502,579.00 of which is the March payment to Davis Construction for the WWTP Construction
  - • \$ 6,080.00 for the water department's new trailer

***Downey moved, seconded by Swem to accept the consent calendar as presented. Roll call vote carried unanimously.***

**Scheduled Matters from the Floor**

**Introduction of New City Attorney** – The new City Attorney, Mitt Drew, of the firm Kotz Sangster, introduced himself to the City Commission and indicated he has been working with City Manager Grace on several issues. Based upon the outcome of a meeting scheduled earlier in the day, it is suggested that

a subsequent special meeting should be scheduled later this week to discuss several matters subject to attorney-client privilege that would necessitate a Closed Session.

#### **Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards**

**Friends of McCoy's Creek Trail** – Jerry Flenar presented a trail expansion fundraising update stating that \$91,000 in private funds have already been raised, he is confident they will reach or exceed their fundraising goal and will be seeking a commitment from the City at a future meeting.

**Buchanan Common Committee: Board Appointment Recommendation** – The Buchanan Common Committee, at their April 19, 2020 meeting, recommends approval of the board application from Michael Rowland, CEO of the Michigan Gateway Foundation.

***Money moved, seconded by Swem to approve the appointment of Michal Rowland to the Common Committee. Roll call vote carried unanimously.***

#### **Unfinished Business**

**Edgewater Bank** – Sorin Mihalache, Director of Property Management at United Federal Credit Union indicated that we should consider the Edgewater Bank property fully vacated by United Federal and thereby available for sale or lease to a third party on July 1, 2021. A proposal has been offered to leave the furniture for the City, if the City is interested in it, along with an offer to consider negotiating a settlement. Past discussions have included the possibility of allowing the City PD to expand into that part of the building, especially if the City decides to use some of the revenue from the annual marijuana permits to hire a new police officer dedicated to foot patrol and parking enforcement downtown. Past discussions have also included the possibility of having the City's utility billing receptionist work out of that section of the building so that residents could have the convenience of paying water bills and taxes through the bank's existing drive-thru structure. Manager Grace seeks the Commission's guidance on this issue.

***Weedon moved, seconded by Downey to table the issue until the first Commission Regular Meeting following a Special Session with the City Attorney on April 29. Roll call vote carried unanimously.***

#### **New Business**

**City Investment Policy** – The City of Buchanan "Investment Policy" is submitted to Commission approval. It emphasizes preservation of capital and minimization of risk. Such a policy is utilized by the Treasurer, who is delegated authority to oversee the City's investments.

***Swem moved, seconded by Money to ratify the City of Buchanan Investment Policy. Roll call vote carried unanimously.***

#### **Communications** *(informational only, formal board action is not necessary for these items, unless so desired)*

**Draft Budget Proposal** – On Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, City Manager Grace presented the Commissioners with a working draft of a proposed budget for fiscal year 2021/2022 (which runs July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). This working draft will serve as the starting point to allow Commissioners to make comments for the City Managers consideration prior to the creation of a more formalized draft, which will be submitted in the coming weeks for review by the Commission as an action item on the agenda in May. No action by the Commission is required in relation to budget at this time, as final review and approval is not required at this juncture.

**Taxables** – The City Assessor has prepared and presented the final taxable values for the City of Buchanan, which are summarized as follows: \$ 115,058,120 total for real and personal taxes within the City, of which \$ 106,385,120 is Real Property and \$ 8,673,00 is Personal Property. These figures represent the total assessed *value* and not the amount that is collected in taxes (which is calculated based on the millage rate divided by 1000 multiplied by the value of the parcel in question). Further breakdowns are as follows:

- Commercial: Real- \$ 17, 860,600 Personal- \$ 3,043,600
- Industrial: Real- \$ 13,342,400 Personal- \$ 630,100
- Residential: Real- \$ 75,182,120 Personal- \$ 0
- Utility: Real- \$ 0 Personal- \$ 4,999,300

#### **Public Comment (non-agenda items)**

- **Dale Toerne** – Heard that JT Adkerson may be retiring soon and would like to thank and recognize him for his hard work. Stated he was disappointed in the Commissioners who voted against paid maternity leave – it paints women as second-class citizens.
- **Alan Robandt** – Spoke regarding the board and commission policy stating that Dan Vigansky and Joe Paolucci are being prevented from being on boards. Complained that several businesses in town were not approached for trail donations and are treated as outsiders – even Don Ryman is treated like an outsider. Expressed the City doesn't need another police officer downtown but does need to use the marijuana revenue to invest in downtown.
- **Dan Vigansky** – Countered Toerne's comment congratulating the Commissioners who voted against paid leave for saving the City money and made a threatening remark regarding JT Adkerson.

*Mayor Denison admonished speakers saying, while this is a public forum where people are allowed to say what they want, he encourages people to use some level of decorum. Vigansky, unrecognized to speak, rebutted and was ordered "muted" by the Mayor.*

- **Rebecka Hoyt** – Promoted the Urban Design Studio open house at the Common on Wednesday, April 5:00 p.m. stating The Chronicle will be present. They will also have a booth at the Buchanan Farmers' Market which starts its season this Saturday, May 1.
- **Monroe Lemay** – Promoted the second Mental Health Forum on Sunday from 2:00-4:00 p.m., hosted by One Buchanan and the City of Buchanan, which will focus on COVID-19 and the effects in the home.

#### **Executive Comments**

- **City Manager Grace** – Encouraged everyone to attend the Urban Design Studio open house, reminded that masking and social distancing are required. Vendors, developers and the press are expected to be in attendance. Thanked Rich Murphy for his work on the project.
- **Commissioner Downey** – None.
- **Commissioner Money** – Welcomed Attorney Drew stating expecting that he will be valuable to what the City is trying to accomplish. Stated Jerry Flenar has done an outstanding job.
- **Commissioner Swem** – Stated he is looking forward to seeing everyone on Wednesday. He is requesting an update questions asked at recent work session regarding millages. Asked if there was a deadline for Board Applications in the event the boards to not respond in a timely manner. (Grace responded that we would follow up and send applications directly to the Commission if boards were unresponsive.

- **Commissioner Weedon** – Excited by what Flenar accomplished. Robandt’s voice was heard. Looking forward to Wednesday.
- **Mayor Denison** – Hopes to see everyone at the Common on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m., rain or shine. Noted that Saturday, May 1 is the first day of the Buchanan Farmers’ Market for the season and it is always nice to see and visit with people there. Made the statement that Don Ryman is not an outsider and whether you feel like an outsider or not has a lot to do with how you interact with the community.

**Adjourn**

***Downey moved, seconded by Money to adjourn. Roll call vote carried unanimously. Mayor Denison adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.***

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Barbara A. Pitcher, City Clerk

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Mayor Sean Denison

PENDING APPROVAL